



Are You “Ready in Renton”?

By I. David Daniels, Fire Chief/Emergency Services Administrator

Just how prepared are we as a city? There is currently little information to objectively assess our overall preparedness. Before we as a city can have an objective conversation about “better” preparedness, we need to know where we are now. This need to establish our current level of preparedness is the basis for a new community awareness campaign called “Ready in Renton.”

Preparedness is actually a very personal issue based on perceptions. “**Ready in Renton,**” an emergency preparedness awareness campaign held **August 8-10**, gives residents an opportunity to test their emergency preparedness with respect to power, provisions, and shelter. Residents are encouraged to estimate their current level of emergency preparedness on the web at rentonwa.gov by following the “Ready in Renton” link, or by calling the City of Renton’s Emergency Management Division at 425-430-7027 prior to August 8th. Participating individuals and households will then be encouraged to test their preparedness to be without resources for one, two or three days in one, two or three areas - power, provisions and shelter. Residents may choose to go without power, live off of only the provisions in their emergency kit, or camp out to see how well they are prepared for the conditions they may face in a disaster.

After the “Ready in Renton” challenge, a follow up survey will ask residents if they were as prepared as they thought they were. Information gained from this community exercise will assist officials in better focusing preparedness education efforts.

One aspect that many often forget when the word “disaster” is mentioned is the fact that disasters are equal in their impacts but not necessarily in their effects. The level of impact depends on the ability of the individual to address the situation. On a daily basis, **events** occur that require interactions between residents of our city. These events include activities like going to work, recreating and visiting friends. On occasion, these events become **incidents**, or cases when the event starts to go a direction or present a consequence that people are not fully prepared to address. These incidents often necessitate a response from the city (usually fire or police departments). Some incidents are bona fide **emergencies**, where lives or property are threatened. Emergencies that exceed the resources available in the city are **disasters**. After a disaster, emergency

responders are overwhelmed by calls for service and cannot be everywhere that help is needed during the first few hours and days of the emergency.

Being prepared for an emergency is actually a civic duty that is shared by all residents in a community. Individuals who are personally prepared for disaster are doing their part to free up responders to help people who may not be able to help themselves, such as senior citizens, disabled persons, or children. However, not everyone needs to or will prepare in the same way.

Emergency preparedness is not difficult. Make a plan, build a kit and get involved. An emergency plan can be as simple as talking to your household members about what you will do in an emergency and designating a person out of your local dialing area to use as a message board for your family and friends. Long distance circuits are often still working even when local phone switches are not. Putting together a kit with a few basic survival and comfort supplies also does not have to be expensive. Most things that go into a disaster kit are probably already somewhere within the average household.

Residents with questions about disaster preparedness or an interest in training or volunteer opportunities may call the City of Renton's Office of Emergency Management at 425-430-7027.

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